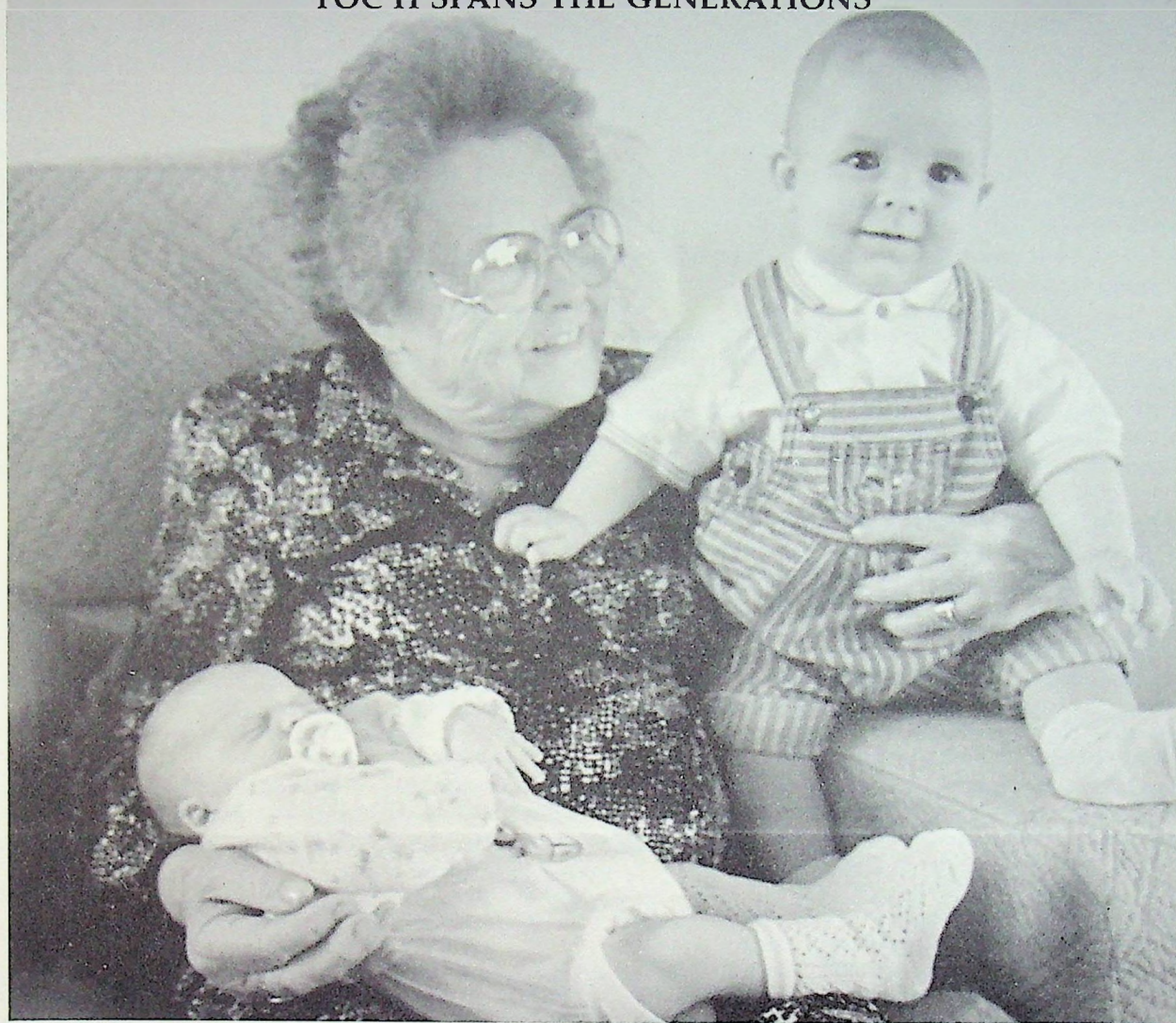


OCTOBER 1991

# Point three

PRICE 30p

TOC H SPANS THE GENERATIONS



In this issue:

**A faith to live by • Kempston Charity Shop**  
**Branch Life in Downend • Dear Tubby**  
**Looking forward to 1992 • Our Focus**


The magazine of



**TOC H**



## Point three

the magazine of  **TOC H**

Toc H is a movement of people who seek to build friendships, and offer service, across the barriers that usually divide us from one another. The basic unit is a group - at best a good cross-section of the local neighbourhood - which meets together regularly, and seeks to serve the community around it. Toc H was founded in 1915 by the Rev P B 'Tubby' Clayton, and since then has been providing opportunities for people to test the Christian way by practical experiment.

All members pledge themselves to try:

1. To welcome all in friendship and lessen by habit of thought, word and deed the prejudices which separate people.
2. To give personal service.
3. To find their own convictions while listening with respect to the views of others.
4. To acknowledge the spiritual nature of man and to test the Christian way by trying it.

This magazine is a forum for ideas about Toc H and about the world as well as a record of Toc H service. Its title derives from the third of these Four Points.

## Stand up and be counted

Those are inspiring words of hope for the human race. They conjure in the mind deeds of heroism, dying for one's beliefs, not betraying a fellow being, courage. And I have always prayed that I could be relied on if the need were to arise—to stand up for what is right and if necessary to die for it.

Human beings have done so much to harm this beautiful planet and, in just a few hundred years, have accelerated that destruction to an irreversible degree - wiping out whole species of animal and plant life. Wiping out entire races of human life - the aboriginal tribes who were in tune with the earth and, some anthropologists say, who were the guardians of the life force of the earth.

There is much about the history of humankind of which to feel deeply ashamed. So when world news coverage focused recently on deeds of heroism worthy of the most inspiring Shakespearean play, it triggered a response of equal magnitude - the feeling that there is hope for humanity. The changes in Russia are of epic proportions - the words uttered by Boris Yeltsin to the many thousands of unarmed Russian people facing tanks brought in by the attempted coup, the bravery of the few army officers who turned their tanks over to support their President.... Yeltsin joined with his people on the most fateful night of their lives: either to win a great victory and overrule the coup without the support of the instruments of war, or to die together. The extraordinarily speedy failure of the coup seemed the most unlikely of outcomes. It created a tidal wave of shock, relief, delirium all over the world. Above all it rekindled hope.

And how urgent was the Russian people's lesson for the West. I was born a few years after the second world war and share with many an appalled feeling that people today are valued mainly for the sum of their material wealth, for their clothes, their home, the quality - if they have one - of their car and their value as a workhorse. How often do we say I love him for his humility, her for the quality of her spirit? That was what the Russian people showed the world. They united together and said 'No'. Boris Yeltsin was prepared to give his life in support of a man with whom he had frequently clashed. And the world watched.

There are lessons for us as individuals, there are lessons for us as a country, there are lessons for us as a movement. Over the last few months members have expressed doubts about the wisdom of the movement's continued existence, doubts about the strength of conviction of the movement, doubts about the direction in which Toc H is going. For 76 years we have been a Christian movement trying to test the example of the life of Jesus, welcoming all in friendship as He did, and offering a purpose to life. There has been no attempt to waver from the firm path that Toc H has always trod.

Perhaps the doubts stem from the fact that the church has increasingly developed into different 'Christian' parties, fundamentalism characterising the extreme at one end.

The re-emergence of fundamentalism and its emphasis on conversion has caused many traditional Christians to become defensive about their beliefs. This seems to have added to the uncertainty within Toc H about the focus of our direction. Both the National Chaplain and the Director have written articles in this issue which clearly state that Toc H is a Jesus-based movement. I have heard them both use that term. We must not be apologetic about using words which others may interpret as tools for converting people to Christianity.

We have an open door, we welcome all in friendship. The intention behind this is to enable people to look at the lifestyle of Jesus, to examine what He said and did and to test our own spirituality in this context and without a 'party label'. In his article about our focus, John Mitchell says, 'We don't ask people to become Christians, but simply to try living on Jesus's terms, and see where it leads them'.

Alan Johnson explains in the first of two articles why Toc H has ordained members of the church on its staff. He examines his own beliefs and emphasises 'that Christianity is at the heart of Toc H'. Both Alan and John's articles are a clear response to a request to 'stand up and be counted'.

Ruth Boyd

**Editor:** Ruth Boyd

**Editorial Assistant:** Thomas Hill Long

**Cover:** Margaret Lawrence (Rushden Women's Branch) with her great-grandchildren  
— VERY TOC H !

**Photo:** Jean Whiteman (the grandmother!)



Point three is printed on recycled paper

Letters, articles and news items are welcomed and should be addressed to The Editor, *Point three*, Toc H Headquarters, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT. (Tel: 0296 623911)

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### BRANCH NEWS

We would like to receive more news from branches about their work in the community, such as individual projects.



# Why is the Kempston Toc H charity shop successful?

This is the question that occupied my mind during a visit to the shop in June. Was it because of the youthful vigour of the volunteer staff, its prime location in the High Street, or because of the great range of up-market near-new fashion accessories recently discarded by famous film stars?

The staff were certainly youthful and vigorous pensioners that can't be denied. Dressed in blue uniforms with colour coordinated name tags, their friendliness and enthusiasm were contagious. The barriers between the customer and the shop assistant melted as generous comments were offered on the fit of a size 18 £4 evening dress. This was the first clue to the shop's success. The three volunteers that I met were more than helpful. They were concerned for those who entered the shop, whether a young mother looking for children's clothes, a successful executive looking for a waistcoat or the lady looking for a very nice evening dress.

Next there was the location. Retail theory suggests a successful shop needs a great number of people walking past each day. When I arrived at the shop with Pat Turner, the coordinator, we stood outside for five minutes (it was that day in June that we didn't have rain) discussing the neighbourhood and only one person walked past! The shop itself is nothing grand - one of five, including a dairy, a hairdresser and a video shop. The window display was attractive and, Pat assured me, was changed weekly.

Although not in a pedestrian high street, the location still played an important part. This small group of shops served a large council housing estate which provided up to 70% of the customers. The shop was on a busy, but not very busy, road that was also a bus route. There was a parking bay outside that always had some space available during my visit. No hostile double yellow lines here to discourage people dropping off clothing they no longer needed.

And then there was the stock. Apart from the evening dress that went out the same morning it came in, the stock was rather ordinary. Rows and rows of neatly



presented clothes going from small to large. I couldn't see Cliff Richard's castoffs anywhere. A pity. I think he's the same size as me.

Staff, location, stock. The three keys to the successful Toc H charity shop. Well - not quite. Coordination of the staff cannot be overemphasised. The key is simplicity in itself. 'Sixteen volunteers - that must take up your whole week and a day to organise?' 'No. I spend Tuesdays in the shop and all the other time would not equal a day'. This turned out to be a reflection on the staff who swap days among themselves and only contact Pat when there is a real problem. The system for handling money, keys and stock was also simple. For example, the price ticket showed which month the goods arrived and this helped to decide which goods had overstayed their welcome and should go in the sale. To a large extent, the shop ran itself.

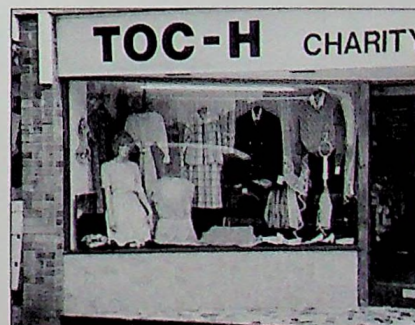
Standing under a framed picture of 'Venture', a dog for the blind donated by the shop, I asked the question: 'What other spin-offs are there?' Pat enthused. 'A lot more people know about Toc H in this area. We have been able to help a lot of people locally friendship-wise, as well as financially.' Pat went on to talk about these people they have been able to befriend and those they had been able to help, such as the young lad who needed a special wheelchair. She also spoke of buying a minibus and coach loads of elderly people going on outings. The shop had provided a shot to branch life in other ways as well. Pat: 'Two helpers have started to come along to branch meetings

regularly and another four come along occasionally. The average age of the branch membership has lowered.'

I then went on to ask about money. 'Where did you get it from to start the shop?' Pat: 'Toc H provided a loan for the lease which we will have paid off this year. And we share the profits - half going to the branch and half to Toc H centrally. Not only that, some of our half still goes to Toc H centrally through Family Purse. And you know, Ian, there is the Membership Development Fund just waiting for anyone else wanting to start another shop.'

Well, there you are. How about it: starting your own Toc H charity shop? Running a charity shop is not that onerous and it is certainly within the grasp of many branches. To help you, Pat and I are joining forces (it is a very unequal partnership - I am lightweight) to offer any assistance we can and smooth the way to you opening your very own Toc H Charity Shop. **Ian Pearce, Fundraiser**

Write to Mrs Pat Turner, 60 Hall End Road, Wootton, Bedford MK43 9HR or contact me at Headquarters.





12 August 1991

**Dear Stewart**

Thank you for your letter, which you wrote in place of the editorial in August *Point three*. I am surprised you know my address. I normally do not publish it, so this reply has no address where others may find me to try to use my experience to revive some of the lost spirit of Toc H. Let us all concentrate on the nature of the task rather than the importance or title of any one individual. You will know that I always believed in Toc H as 'God's Show' and that in God's good time Toc H would die. The question is whether it will be a glorious death or a lingering passing in an old person's home.

Another question is, 'What has happened to the self-assessment that everyone in the movement made?' If today we can only persuade people to pay to support their local work, we put an end to the ability of the centre to expand. If that ability contracts, Toc H faces a lingering death.

I never felt the need to lower my own loyalty to Christ in order to attract new members. I was glad if men and women, who did not know Christ, should work alongside me. I think something of my beliefs rubbed off on them when they asked to become members. We never were a 'charismatic' Christian movement but equally never lost sight of what the Upper Room stood for. As the Upper Room was open to men of all colours, races and creeds, so is Toc H today. The Upper Room will always be there for as long as Toc H exists. I am glad to know your background. I am confident that you will strive to find the truth that will help to make all men free.

Yours in love

**Tubby**

**My dear Stewart**

Yes, I have seen your letter and understand your feelings. Let me deal with the question about your father first. No, I did not meet him in France but are you sure I have not met him since? His God and my God are one and the same Person, that is why the Upper Room was open to all.

I will answer your loaded question by asking you one in return. Did, or does, God (the God of both Jew and Gentile) ever turn anyone away who truly turns to him in faith? In your second letter we have much in common, but first let me say that what was done in France and later through Everyman's Club and subsequently Toc H was not my show, it was God's show, and I and my colleagues were his instruments. Try to look at Toc H in the same way today and don't be afraid to step out into the unknown.

You are concerned about declining membership. Don't be disheartened but remember that God (in Christ) was faced with exactly the same situation. Don't you remember that many left him because they could not take his 'hard sayings'? But don't forget what he did with the remaining 12! Although so many left him it did not make him water down his 'Highway Code' one iota. I like the thirteenth paragraph of your second letter, i.e. 'I think...positively', but I wish you had added two extra words to make it read, 'to think AND ACT positively'.

You speak of the Fourth Point of the Compass. Why not leave it (and the others) as originally stated, i.e. to love widely, to build bravely, to think fairly, to witness humbly - and let God guide each man and woman to find their own interpretation. These compass points were meant to be guidelines to any human being of whatever race or creed, or no creed at all, so are you not complicating the issue with so many 'explanations' by putting thoughts into peoples' minds instead of challenging them to think things out for themselves?

Stewart, I read your letters as one who is truly seeking guidance both for yourself and for the Toc H movement as a whole. My advice to you and all members of Toc H is that you do what I did, i.e. seek God's guidance in all things and in all faith, listening now and always to him, and do whatever he tells you to do however strange it may seem (remember now and always to him, and do incident?). God's ways are not man's ways and He knows best.

I do hope this letter will be of some help to you and I will pray for you and your colleagues.

May God bless you all. Yours sincerely, **'Tubby'**

PS. This too is an open letter to be shared with your colleagues and all members of Toc H.



Dear Stewart

3 September 1991

You may remember me from the Western Approaches and Chiltern Vale District AGM earlier this year. Congratulations on your letters so far, and even more so on taking on the vital and enormous task of stimulating and invigorating us to save Toc H. How marvellous, miraculous, for an administrative 'paperpushing' secretary (as you describe yourself) of his own concern and accord to take on this onerous role. *Laus deo*.

I was very much in your position when I first joined Toc H myself. My father was Jewish, though not a practising Jew, but very loyal to the Jewish community, i.e. his Jewish friends, most of whom it seems to me were also Jewish only by family heritage.

When I joined Toc H in Sheffield in 1935 after college in London, I was commended to do so by a close school and family friend with a similar kind of Jewish background who had been a member for some years. Then I began to live at Mark VIII (Sheffield), perhaps six months later. It was my first trip North and people were extraordinarily kind to me. No one asked if I was Jewish and I think I was hardly aware that I was. Toc H opened a new and wonderful chapter of my life which goes on as enthusiastically now as at the beginning. My quick answer to the enquiry 'What is Toc H?' has always been a wholehearted 'The best thing I know', followed by as much detail as time permits and the passing on of a little leaflet.

In view of what I have got out of Toc H, I can't agree with your remark that Toc H doesn't give members very much back for the contribution they make.

Yours in Toc H, Rudolf Loewy, W Approaches and Chiltern Vale District Branch

1 August 1991

Dear Stewart

Re August 1991 *Point three*, your explanation of 'Where you are'.

I feel much at one with you, and when I have 'sampled, tasted and digested' (as per Master Chef on TV), I shall no doubt write further with my ideas, which will surface.

'Where are we?' We are five members who are the remains of our very active (years ago) Bakewell Toc H Branch. In company with Alfreton Branch, we now base ourselves at Alison House. Alan James, Chairman (Alfreton Branch), Gordon Ecob, Secretary, Stan Mitchell, Treasurer, Bruce Hadfield, Edwin Harrison (Pilot), Violet Walker.

Yours

Stan Mitchell

Cavendish District Branch (Derbyshire).

Dear Tubby

Your kindness knows no bounds and I was both delighted and heartened to receive your two letters so far. From a personal standpoint I am glad to know that my father would have been accepted and appreciate also your words of encouragement.

Between us, I hope that we will be able to get further response from the readers of *Point three* - this seems the best vehicle for getting reaction from the members of 'Toc H'. And if, as we must, we are to develop and implement a long-term strategy to take us into the next century, it is essential that the views and the feelings of all members are heard and understood.

I know that I may provoke some angry reaction and quite frankly I welcome any response because what I am also trying to get across is that all points of view must be listened to.

I perceive that for too long there has been a tendency for some members to see your movement only through their own eyes and pay no regard to how others (less well informed) may see it. So, yes, I am sorry if I may have given the impression that we should abandon the Fourth Point of the Compass - but I did not say that, all I did was ask that it be more universal. You have said as much in your letter.

I believe we have much more to discuss and I look forward to our future exchange of correspondence.

Yours sincerely, Stewart Casimir, Wendover.

PS. You are quite right, you may well have met my father more recently - all I ask is that you don't believe everything he tells you about me!



# A Faith to live by

## First of a New Series

There is much debate currently about whether Toc H still sees itself as a Christian movement. The editor asked the Revd Alan Johnson, our National Chaplain, why Toc H has a member of the church on its staff, how he sees himself in relation to his job, and asked him to explain his own Christian beliefs.

To describe the National Chaplain of Toc H as *the guardian of the spiritual basis of the movement* begs many questions and leaves me with a mixed sense of privilege and awe. Yet it is a statement that I believe to be true.

Those who have known me for some years will know that Toc H has had a profound effect on me. When I first encountered the movement in 1970 I was a brash, lean 19-year-old settling into a career as a banker. I went to church as a member of the choir, an organist and a server. I ran a youth club where I preached at the members and led Bible studies. When invited to become a member of the Toc H Surrey Area Projects Committee, I accepted with no knowledge of the movement but an arrogant sense of my own importance. I don't know how they put up with me!!

Toc H members of all ages, in their careful, loving way, simply accepted me and encouraged me to play my part in a variety of projects as a volunteer, a leader and as an organiser. The lessons learned - but not understood - in those days have made a major contribution to my personal development ever since.

Spirituality, for me as a young man, meant going to church and trying to 'be good'. The music and ritual were emotionally inspiring. I was an accepted part of a group and useful (I think) to the vicar. I understood the New Testament, variously, as fascinating old writing, the words of salvation for a real sinner or a book of ethics. God was just an intellectual idea, so I didn't really see or know him at all. There was no person beyond the words.

Theological college opened my mind to ask questions. After four years I had a better trained intellect and learned about biblical literary criticism, church history and the structure of liturgy. Spirituality now meant asking questions, reading books and understanding the doctrines of Christianity as well as going to church and 'doing good'. I tried to exercise my 'spiritual' ministry from this arid, arrogant, 'intellectual' background. My poor unsuspecting parishioners were very tolerant.

Toc H opened my heart and my eyes. Now, after eleven years' association, six years on the staff and over two years as National Chaplain, I see things in a very different way. Spirituality for me now means relationship, meaning and purpose, abundance of life, fulfilment. It is the root of everything - material and psychological. It carries everything I hold most dear - loving relationships, music, the mountains of Wales, my ministry. God is not now just an intellectual concept but a living Being perceivable in everything.

It seems to be in the very nature of Toc H to challenge and change people and lead them to a deeper understanding of themselves and the world, sometimes without their even knowing it. Those people I met first in the movement did more than simply tolerate me, they accepted me for myself with real love. They never openly challenged my arid, theoretical spirituality, but put me in the way

of relationships and experiences which opened the way for the Spirit.

Looking back, I can see that those days, and my first days on the staff as a development officer in Kent, laid the seeds of who I am, what I believe and how I exercise my ministry today as National Chaplain.

This is both an awesome and an exciting job. It is awesome because to be the guardian of the spiritual basis of the movement is a huge responsibility, impossible to achieve on my own, and because it would be so easy to abandon or dilute the spiritual basis. It is exciting because it constantly challenges me to question what the spiritual basis really means, and because the movement is on its way to an exciting future.

Christianity is fundamental to my life and to my role in Toc H. It may not have been an orthodox development, but my story is that of an individual pilgrim. Ever since my teenage years as a youth searching for my own identity through a variety of Christian denominations (from Born-again Baptist to Charismatic to Anglo-Catholic), Christianity has been a nagging ache that I cannot ignore. There have been times, both as a layman and as a priest, when I have doubted the sanity of it all. There have been the dark nights of the soul when God seemed utterly absent. There have been too many times when all that I have believed in has been shattered by an experience of pain or trauma in myself or others.

There are times when I feel that I could reject God, the Bible and the Church. But God will not let me go, and I cannot make any sense of life without God. And Jesus... Ah, Jesus... That incomprehensible figure of history. That goody-goody baby who never cried in the manger, the man who healed lepers at a touch. Who turned water into wine at a wedding feast and told the most wonderful stories. Who claimed to be everything and nothing. Who wept tears, as of drops of blood, in Gethsemane and stood silent against the lies at his trial. Who cried out in the agony of his death throes on a tree and transformed the world by his living words of peace on the third day.

This Jesus. Sometimes I feel I know him better than I know myself. At other times he is the greatest enigma of history. Yes, there are times when I feel I could reject him too, but I cannot. Through all the struggles of wonderful, painful everyday life he will not let me go and, like Jacob wrestling with the angel, I cannot let go of his heel. Lord, to whom can we go? You have the message of eternal life.

At this point in my writing, words become very dangerous. They become things chiselled for all time on granite slabs, liable to be quoted back at me in vengeance. The words themselves become both too firm and, conversely, too flimsy. Too firm because they define things too analytically when what serves better is the delicacy and depth of art. Too flimsy because they are not adequate in describing the indescribable.

I hear the questions. What say you of the Christ? What do you mean by 'Christianity'? When you describe yourself as the guardian of the spiritual basis, what do you mean by spiritual? God help me, I cannot tell you. That is to say, I can tell you what I believe, but will that help you? You must find your own answer to those questions.

But I can, at least, try. Although, remember what I said about the danger of words. As the old alchemists would say, 'Bear with me gentle reader...'



I believe that God is One and the Creator of all things.  
I believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that they are one person with the Holy Spirit.

I believe that God is both in everything and beyond all things (in theological language, immanent and transcendent), that he is all-knowing, all-powerful, all-loving and sustains all things by his very Being. I believe that Jesus is the supreme revelation of the One God. That in knowing him we know God, but that God is also revealed in all creation.

I believe that all people contain the image of God within them, and that their purpose is to fulfil their God-given potential and become whole in themselves and with God. This is salvation.

I believe that, in Jesus Christ, if we choose, we have salvation - not by merit, not by action, but by divine will and love. Not because Jesus is a substitute for any person's individual and unique God-given purpose, but because in Jesus there is the pattern of a path to follow in living love and achieving the fulfilment of our souls, no matter what the cost.

I believe that love is the 'prime directive' for all humanity. It is the fulcrum of the universe. It is against this love we must judge our own actions and lives and are, in turn, measured against the love revealed in Jesus.

So much for the words. But what do they tell you of the love I have experienced in relationships at home, among friends, and in Toc H? And, do you now know what I mean when I say that God is the fabric of my being? Will you measure those words I have written against the Creeds, the Thirty-nine Articles in the Anglican Prayer Book, the witness of the Charismatics, the words of the Bible or the Word made Flesh? If you do, you will risk making judgements which I cannot make.

Rather, to understand truly what I have learnt I would suggest you listen to music instead. Mahler's Second Symphony shouts of the glory of the Resurrection, the simple music of John Rutter's Celtic Prayer gives a deep sense of peace, and the Saint-Saens Organ Symphony sings of the splendour of creation. These are statements which communicate spirituality, God, Jesus and the meaning of Life better than any words.

When I describe the role of the National Chaplain as the guardian of the spiritual basis of Toc H, I bring to that role a deep and personal conviction of the importance of spirituality in this broad sense. A spirituality which derives from love in action, relationship, and a personal discovery that *whether called or not, the God will be present*, living and loving.

This spirituality is the result of my experiences in Toc H which have led me to the understanding that judgement of other people's beliefs derives from my own uncertainties and doubt. Toc H has always been a pioneer of tolerance and understanding through the erosion of prejudice by fellowship and service. It has drawn people together in deliberate mixture to build bravely a society based on the principles of the Kingdom of God. Those principles are not exclusive, nor is the society we build, nor the one we call Toc H. They are the principles of a loving Lord who spent his life in love. We fail both those principles and the founders of this movement if we try in any way to do other than witness humbly.

As National Chaplain I constantly seek to ensure that certain principles remain secure at the roots of Toc H. The first is that of the open door which accepts everyone without question, challenge or test. The second is that of the Upper Room which remains Christian in its prayer and its ministry but witnesses humbly and without coercion to the truth that behind the ebb and flow of things temporal stand the eternal realities.



I resist any attempt to put conditions on membership of the movement except the one existing condition of 'working towards the aims of Toc H as set out in The Four Points of the Compass', as stated in the membership application. I also resist any move to impose any specific religious allegiance on volunteers or members. I firmly believe, however, that all people involved with Toc H should be enabled and encouraged to reflect on their experiences and test in their own lives the validity of the claims made by Jesus in his teachings and in the way he lived - as is written in the Statement of Re-Affirmation. I shall continue to work to ensure that this happens.

I don't believe that my own understanding of spirituality or theology or God is by any means the Whole Truth yet. I have a lot to learn and I'm looking forward to the continuing of that learning. In my ministry in Toc H, in the church and community, in my counselling and psychotherapy work, I shall go on listening and asking questions and trying to find that Truth.

The role of National Chaplain is an important one, because the office is a clear proclamation to everyone that Christianity is at the heart of Toc H. Having, for example, a minister from some other religion as a broadminded move into the 90s would betray our roots and our purpose. We must retain our Christian basis.

I also think it is right that the National Chaplain should be involved in the management of the movement. There are difficulties in reconciling this with pastoral responsibilities, but the leadership of Toc H should intimately involve a Christian minister with the particular training, experience and interpretation that this role carries. This is important as an influence both in policy-making and in the day-to-day management of the movement's resources of all kinds.

Toc H faces great changes and challenges in the immediate future. We have come to a watershed in our development as a movement. I face those changes and challenges with conviction and confidence.

I am clear in my vision of the role of Toc H in this decade and beyond, and in the continuing relevance of the fundamental principles of the movement. Toc H stands on the edge of a more subtle battleground today - that of prejudice and meaninglessness. Such things must be overcome by love and understanding. This is the traditional Toc H approach, building bravely and witnessing humbly. None of this will be easy, but I am confident that with support and guidance from the Spirit of Light, we will be pointed into the future.

Now my mixed sense of privilege and awe is not just in the responsibility of my role as National Chaplain, but in the task we all face as members of this marvellous movement. But look, there is the Light leading us forward again.... ■



# Looking Forward to 1992

During the first two weeks of August, Talbot House, Poperinge, was the venue for Toc H's first International Project. It had taken over 18 months to coordinate and involved nine young people from six European countries. Sue Biggerstaff, who along with Heather Chalkely and Philip Walker led the project, explains what it set out to achieve and describes some of the things which made a lasting impression on her.

Peace, reconciliation and friendship lie at the heart of Talbot House, making it the ideal location for a project of this kind. The theme was 'Looking Forward to 1992' and the aim was to enable young people of different European nationalities to reach greater mutual understanding through physical work and a series of cultural exchange workshops. Six countries were represented: Spain, Portugal, Italy, Germany, Belgium and England, and each of us, it has to be said, came with various preconceived notions of what each nationality would be like. However, through living, working and talking together, the group managed to discard the stereotyped images, realising that such labels are unhelpful and generally inaccurate.

The two weeks were a real education in group dynamics. As the workshop facilitator, I was able to sit back and watch how people behaved during the discussion groups, to observe the roles they chose to assume and to smile at the 'games' that were going on. Meanwhile, as one of the project leaders, I was able to watch the group develop and take shape. For the first few days, the volunteers were almost completely reliant upon us; they looked to us to make decisions, to initiate activity, to start conversation. Then, sub-groups began to form and, as friendships became more tangible the dependency of the first week was broken.



*Fabio, Rita and Philip renovating the Slessorium*



*Relaxing at Bellewarde Theme Park*

One of the things which made a big impression on me was the way in which members of the Flemish community reacted to the fact that one of the volunteers was German. To the people of Flanders, the experience of war and occupation remains close and there was a danger that, in this atmosphere, Ansgar might feel victimised and ill at ease. On the third day, the group started work at Hill 60, Zillebeke. The task was to landscape the area around the Sappers' Memorial by digging up the turf, preparing the soil and planting 200 rose bushes. Because of the gruelling nature of the work and the intense heat, nobody had a chance to reflect on our surroundings and just got on with the job.



*Planting the roses at Hill 60*

Then halfway through the morning, two Flemish veterans of the Second World War arrived. When Ansgar was introduced there was a slight pause before one of them moved forward and placed a hand on Ansgar's shoulder. He assured him that they didn't hold him responsible for what his country had done. 'The hand of friendship is better than the hand of war every time,' he continued. Indeed, whilst they were with us, the two men directed most of what they said at Ansgar and were particularly keen to show him the nearby grave of two French resistance fighters shot by the Germans during an escape attempt.

From the side lines, this meeting was a curious incident to observe. For Ansgar, it prompted him to think about where he was and to realise that he had suddenly become the focus of attention not because of who he was as an individual, but because of the country he represented. It was a feeling he had to get used to for, on several occasions, people 'homed in' on him by virtue of the fact that he was German.



During the physical work activities, I was able to take off my leader's hat and enjoy the camaraderie of the group. This was a valuable experience, for I discovered that I am not the wimp I thought I was; that as the sun beat down on Hill 60, I was able to ignore the blistered hands and continue to hack away at the hard-baked ground; that despite the clouds of thick grey dust raised by our brushes in the tower of Messines Church and the battalions of spiders encountered during the cleaning of the crypt, an unwavering team spirit forged strong friendships and gave us the determination to finish the job. By the end of the two weeks, the group had transformed all three work-sites. The exterior of the Garden House at Talbot House had been completed. A semi-miracle had been performed inside the Slessorium, which is due to become a Visitors' Centre. The crypt and tower of Messines Church were left in almost pristine condition. And, against all the odds, our Hill 60 roses started to flower in the last days of the project.

Meanwhile, the way in which the volunteers contributed to the workshop discussions really impressed me. The depth of thought given to what they said and the honesty displayed blew apart the myth that modern youth is self-centred and apathetic. One of the most interesting sessions followed the Salient Tour, when each was asked to draw an interpretation of one of the places we had visited. Several of the drawings featured the Langemark German Cemetery and the Pool of Peace, and the ensuing discussion revealed that the tour had affected most people. We concluded that war is a futile waste of life - nothing very original, admittedly.



*Putting their backs into the planting*



*A job well done at Hill 60*

But after the workshop finished there was an air of depression in the room and it was obvious that people couldn't just walk away and carry on with the next programmed activity. 'I feel so empty,' said Fabio, the Italian volunteer. 'Such discussions always end with that conclusion but you feel so ineffective and unable to change anything.'

Certain phrases stick in my mind and remain clear and sharp against the bustling background of the project. 'The thing I am most proud of about my country is its young people'. We learnt a lot from Rita, the Portuguese volunteer, who painted her country as a place of optimism, a nation full of hope and enthusiasm on the threshold of development after years of political repression. Then there was the comment made by Elena from Spain, that 'we can only seem to talk in a real way during the discussion groups. Why does it have to stop when the session is over?' And in the final workshop when we were reflecting on the two weeks, Martine from Belgium said, 'I would like to repeat the experience of being part of a group which accepts me for what I am'.

There is no doubt in my mind that Toc H should now look to organising such a project on an annual basis. During the fortnight, we received extensive media coverage featuring in more than half a dozen local and national newspapers as well as on national radio and television. The name Toc H was very high profile and the project aroused a lot of public interest. We even had enquiries from young people living in Poperinge who wanted to join in there and then! Secondly, the majority of the volunteers arrived at Talbot House at the beginning of August with a very hazy knowledge of what Toc H is. Two weeks later they left, having asked for publicity packs to be sent to them so that they could advertise Toc H in their own countries. Additionally, they all committed themselves to being involved in organising an International Project next year.

Such enthusiasm should not be disregarded and it is important now to nurture the interest shown. This project has presented Toc H with an ideal opportunity to raise its profile on the continent, at a time when the concept of European unity is prominent in peoples' minds. For me, one of the simplest reasons for making this project more than just a one-off was given by one of the volunteers: 'I have been shown that it is possible to escape from the routine of life, from the pressure and the monotony. I have been shown that there is a way out'.



Some members have asked whether the movement has a clear policy. In this article our Director, John Mitchell, asserts that we do indeed, and expands on the Focus Resolution.

## Our Focus

*'In today's society, which is disabled by division, mistrust and doubt, Toc H will provide opportunities for people to meet who would not otherwise do so, to develop fellowship, to work together, and to discover a faith to live by'.*

These ringing words were the core of our 1989 'Focus for the Future' resolution. It was carried with enthusiasm at Central Council in 1989, and since then has been the yardstick by which the Central Executive has tried to manage the resources it has - and that's mainly people (the staff) and money. No mandate could be more relevant to today's society, and I believe Toc H has seldom had a clearer 'direction' given by its Central Council. It was achieved after many branches and members had given their views and it clearly reflected what they said.

I find it a little alarming, therefore, when I hear members saying that they are not given enough clear direction. It may be that some members will say that they have not heard about this Focus, and I could well believe that; reporting back is always a bit unreliable, and not everyone reads *Point three*. Alternatively, it may be that some people do not actually agree with this direction and are asking for a different one.

However there must be many other people who have indeed read this Focus more than once, who agree with what it says, but who yet cannot see in it a clear path for them to tread. In his letter about leadership in the May issue of *Point three*, my former colleague John Marshall suggested that Toc H objectives are not specific enough or clearly enough defined. I have to say to him, and to others, that I find in the Focus statement (quoted above) a very clear and precise guideline, saying exactly what Toc H is going to do. The fact that it may not be a single objective, or one we can count or measure accurately, does not mean that we do not have a real purpose and direction. It is no less valuable for being immeasurable. Indeed, I would go so far as to claim that what Toc H is seeking to do is literally of immeasurable importance - and in the normal use of language, that means a lot!

But what does our Focus mean in practice? Each of the four intentions is worth looking at separately.

1. *'For people to meet who would not otherwise do so...'*

We have committed ourselves to provide opportunities for such meeting of people. This has clear roots in the origins of Toc H and is certainly what took place in Talbot House, Poperinge. It has happened in the movement ever since. We believe we have four tested methods through which Toc H does this - the Branch/Group, the Project, the Friendship Circle and the Cameo. Our commitment is to build more of all of these, to encourage people into long-term involvement with Toc H and to ensure that in them we do indeed bring together a mixture of people. We have to be sure that when we say, 'Toc H brings people together', we really do that.

Toc H at its finest has been the architect of the most unlikely human meetings, leading at times to surprising but lasting relationships. We plan to carry on doing this ourselves and challenging others to do so, too. It isn't easy; people don't often choose to take the risks involved, but that is the challenge.

If any member says to me, 'Give me more direction', I must simply reply, 'Go out and persuade someone who doesn't look like a typical Toc H member to come to your branch or group'. Of course it isn't easy. If it was we would not call it a challenge. It may not work - but that is the direction to go, in the faith that even if it does not succeed this time, the very act of trying is a statement that is in itself well worth making. It is a challenge that every member can choose to respond to - wherever they are - whoever they are.

2. *'...to develop fellowship...'*

That may sound a bit frightening to some and yet a bit too cosy for others. It really means that we should work to get to know each other rather better than just casual acquaintances - and that means getting to know each other well. It requires us to let others know us well. That's risky. It is safer to clam up and not let others know a lot about us. But in Toc H we argue that it is only when we risk letting others know us - warts and all - and risk admitting differences and disagreements - that we can progress to a real deep friendship which will last and which can embrace



others. Too many groups and branches, projects and Friendship Circles, have only a superficial level of friendship, and people avoid the risks of openness. Here again, when we say, 'Toc H brings people together', we mean more than just superficial contact.

So here's another challenge! *Why not review your own group or branch or circle, and ask yourself, 'How well do we really know each other?'* If we are inviting others to share our fellowship it must be more than a vague, superficial jollity - somewhere where we are sure of ourselves because our friends know us well, and yet we are still welcome! Of course it isn't easy, but if it was we wouldn't call it a challenge.

### 3. '*...to work together...*'

This challenge is linked to the one above, because Toc H has known since its earliest days that fellowship is built by corporate activity. Working together is part of the glue that binds people together, especially different sorts of people, and we overlook that at our peril. Too many branches, when asked what they do, talk about their individual acts of service to the community. That is of real value, and to be encouraged, but by itself it will not sustain the life of the group. All groups need common activities to glue them together, and the branch that loses sight of that will not last long and will be most unlikely to involve anyone new.

Implicit in '*working together*' is the notion that it is work *with* and *for* others in the community. **Toc H is probably best known for its community work and the challenge to look outwards and respond is a key part of the membership commitment.**

And let's not assume that money-raising is an alternative. It is not. It may be a thoroughly good thing to do, and may be fun - but Toc H has always emphasised the challenge to 'personal' service. That means getting your own hands dirty, not paying others to get their hands dirty. I am saddened when I hear members say that they do fund-raising because they are too old, or too few in number, for direct involvement in community service. That's tragic. Just look at the example of Lee Branch (September *Point three*) who only have three active members! No one is asking older members to go and chop down trees or paint houses, but there are thousands of other ways of direct personal involvement.

**We are not about 'cheque-book' service but about a face-to-face sharing with others, in friendship.** Money-raising may be an expression of a concern, but it is not an expression of friendship. The challenge is to work together, face to face, with others in the community. It may not be easy, but if it was we would not call it a challenge.

### 4. '*...to discover a faith to live by*'.

Now there's a real challenge! How could we possibly suggest anything more worthwhile, more important, and more life-touching? From its earliest days Toc H has been clear that all its aspects must be seen as a way of testing and developing one's deepest faith. 'An honest test' is a well known term in Toc H and expresses the fact that we are involved in a practical testing, for ourselves, of the Christian way. An honest test does not offer guarantees that people will like it, or agree with it, or find it right for them. **We don't ask people to become Christians, but simply to try living on Jesus's terms, and see where it leads them.**

For those of us who are Christians (and I include myself) and are confident of our Faith, that is enough. We don't have to prescribe exactly *how* people will test their faith or what answers they should come up with, or whether they should join in prayers. That would be a response stemming from the fear that they might not see it our way! We are not about getting people to see it our way, but about finding the way that is right for them and that will bring them closer to God, whatever they conceive him to be.

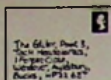
As Bob Knight says in his introduction to *Joyful Journey*, 'I have come to realise that...this God will meet you where *you* are and not where *I* am. All I can do is to hope to arrange a meeting between you'.

This challenge is two-fold - it is a challenge to us to go on exploring our own faith and to encourage others to do so, too. It isn't easy, but if it was we wouldn't call it a challenge.

So how's that for an agenda? If people feel that Toc H is lacking in direction, let them put hands on heart and ask themselves how much of this they will really try. If they really do, then I don't think they will find a shortage of things to achieve nor a shortage of rewards for trying it. The rewards may not be visible or measurable, but the experience of thousands of members is that this way of life is the most rewarding there is.



# Your Letters



## Christ rejected no one.

There has been quite a lot of controversy in the past few years as to the continuing use of Christianity in Toc H. I have found much of interest in the articles about other religious faiths, and it is obvious that many of them do indeed serve the God who created the universe and humanity. That they do not know Christ as Lord and Saviour is to many Christians intolerable, but Christ Himself said that no one would be rejected who served God by serving his fellows, and that implicit faith in His gifts of healing even to nonChristians/followers during His life is attested many times in the Gospels.

We may therefore neither condemn nor reject the help and fellowship of 'men of goodwill' who work with and for Toc H, even if as non-Christians they may only be associates. Rather, it is imperative that we accept what they are and use the gifts of time and service as they are offered in Christ's name and with His blessing. Christ rejected no one and He suffered rejection Himself when men and women turned away from Him. We need to use the term 'practising Christians' again to relearn our faith and to put into daily practice the Love of God which most of us were taught as children. Always remembering that 'practice makes perfect'. The decade of evangelism must start in ourselves before we can - clergy and laity alike - begin to evangelise the world.

*Eunice Hixson, South Africa*

## 'Dear Tubby' - A Place for Us

Apropos Stewart Casimir's opening remarks in his article in September's *Point three*, I quote from the wonderful little brochure 'Talbot House, Poperinge, A Brief History':

'...those who had known it (Talbot House) wanted to preserve a spirit which would overcome the hostility between the different Christian traditions, and would offer a place within the Christian community to those who had no clear Christian beliefs.' (my emphasis)

And that is what I found when I came to live at Mark VIII, (Sheffield) in 1935. Altogether ignorant about religion - and so prejudiced against anything to do with it - I soon found, to my surprise, that religion not only made sense, it appealed to me and began to mean a great deal to me, leading eventually to baptism and a whole new approach to life. In fact, this place for me, a non-believer in a Christian community, not only in the Mark - where the Christian ethos and practice was hardly ever talked about but gradually became evident to me - and also in the wider family of Toc H, into which I was soon drawn, started me on a revealing and joyful journey which continues to this day and is unquestionably the most important thing in my life.

*Rudolf Loewy, Windsor*

## Commitment

For over 20 years I have kept scrapbooks of cuttings appertaining to the movement. Now and again I look at these and it is quite extraordinary how the same themes keep recurring. For instance in April 1969 I had an article published in the then Toc H Journal, entitled 'More Leaders Wanted'. Yet here we are some 22 years on and still embracing the same concepts, viz. Campaign 1991. Again in March 1970 I wrote a piece entitled 'not dead but stagnating'. Does this not find echoes in the movement today?

Recently I was prompted to do some research into the cause of our constant fall in numerical strength. Looking at files at Headquarters for the years 1988/90, I found that 106 branches closed during this period involving 832 members. Of them 390 (47%) resigned, without, as far as I could see, any just cause. No attempt had been made at managerial level to ascertain the reason for such resignations. If the answer is 'because my branch closed', then it just shows how shallow the so called commitment of some people really is. Apart from Toc H I am actively involved in Mencap. Here the situation is quite different and the commitment total, even amongst those of us who have never had to undergo the trauma of bringing up a child with Down's Syndrome.

There is a moral here for Toc H members who seem to give up so easily. When a branch closes this is the time when the challenge is greatest.

*John Morgan, Ruislip*

## Membership and Projects

Gwilym Edwards' letter on membership (September *Point three*) misstates the problem. He says over the past five years Toc H has seen a decline in members under 65 and an increase in members over 65. In fact his figures show Toc H has lost members of all age groups. To me the major conclusion to be drawn from the figures is that membership has declined by 40% in five years. This is staggering. It is in no way due to a failure of Projects as he suggests: it reflects weakness in Toc H as a whole.

We must not be downhearted though. The movement needs to concentrate on the four methods approved in last year's Council resolution: i.e. Branches, Projects, Friendship Circles and Cameos. Toc H's strength will come from activity in each of these areas. We want people to join something that is working.

I've just returned from a week long project for special needs kids in Cuffley, Hertfordshire. It involved the local branch, Toc H staff, a dozen volunteers including a young offender, local parents and a difficult bunch of kids. Friendships were built, service given and barriers broken down - there was even some time left for reflection! That's Toc H working as it should. Perhaps we should break down the barriers a bit more between the methods. Projects need local support and branches need jobs. So why don't we put the two together a little more? How many branches, like the Hertfordshire Branch, sponsor a project? Surely this is a better way to a healthier movement than a drive to sign up members just to boost the rolls.

*Stephen Clark, Kensal Green NW10*



## 'Dear Tubby'

In reply to Stewart Casimir's 'Dear Tubby' (September *Point three*) he may be interested to know that my husband and I went to Evensong at All Hallows one Sunday during the late 1950s. Unexpectedly Tubby invited us over to 42 Trinity Square for supper. The occasion was a 'send-off' to Alison Macfie, one of the founders of the Women's Association, who was setting off on a tour of some of the overseas branches.

The supper party was, of course, a mixed bag and I found myself sitting next to a most interesting man from Hackney who was a taxi-driver. He told me that he had fought in World War I, had known Talbot House, Poperinge, and Tubby, of whom he remained fond. He explained that he was Jewish and so could not actually become a member of Toc H, but that he and Tubby remained friends over all the years and if he could help the movement in any way he was always ready to do so. This, perhaps, answers one of Stewart's queries.

The other point he raises, about the decreasing membership and the difficulty of putting over the Toc H way of life, reminds me of the thousands of people whose lives have been touched by the movement, and saddens me that more of them could not take on commitment to membership. Full membership is not easy and demands sacrifice, not once, but often. Through this and our life and work together we attain a unique fellowship - unique, perhaps, because we are a 'mixture' of folk. It is hard to put over the meaning of Toc H, much harder now than in earlier days when most people had at least some idea of God and of the Christian ethic. This is not so now; we cannot assume anything and start from

scratch. Surely we can still build on the first two Points of the Compass - thinking fairly and loving widely are a good way to live for anyone - and gradually lead on to the Third and Fourth Points?

I am inspired by the example of Lee Branch described in the September issue. They have so many people of goodwill helping them in the background it seems a pity that they are missing the full impact and comfort of our fellowship in the Toc H family.

I don't accept that the Toc H lamp is dim, yet, but does it, and all it stands for, need a jolly good trimming lest it should become so?

*Elisabeth Worth, Chalford Hill, Glos.*

*PS. I am grateful to Alan Johnson for his editorial on a very difficult subject and his example of 'thinking fairly'.*

## Highly Recommended

Following our recent visit to All Hallows, we went in search of somewhere for Sunday lunch. To our pleasant surprise, and only a few minutes walk away, we found Byron's Restaurant, 224 Tower Bridge Road. We highly recommend this place: excellent meal, good service and reasonably priced.

We thought *Point three* readers might like to know this for when they next visit our lovely guild church by the Tower.

*Alan and Isobel Clarkson, Stockport*

## BRANCH NEWS

L.T. Bowdley, Treasurer of Leominster Branch, writes: 'Is there anyone who can help a brave disabled university student from Leominster? Denise Ladd is studying at University College, Cardiff, following a number of major spinal operations and disablement. She recently obtained a degree in English literature and has now been invited to continue with postgraduate research for a Ph.D. Her problem, as a severely disabled person, is funding and she is looking for someone to sponsor her studies, for fees and living expenses in the region of £4000. I spoke to Denise the other day and she is determined to continue her studies despite her disablement and the fact that she has yet another serious spinal operation to



*Altar frontal used for the Ceremony of Light by Wigmore Joint Branch. It was designed and embroidered by Mr A E F 'John' Harvie, Hon Secretary of the branch.*

undergo. If there is anyone in Toc H who can help this very brave lady, she would be extremely grateful.'

Any donations can be sent to:

L.T. Bowdley, Treasurer, **Leominster Branch** Toc H, 'Rose Mullion', 57 Walkers Green, Marden, Hereford HR1 3EB, or direct to Denise, who can be contacted on Cardiff 691635.



# Branch Life in the 1990's

by Jeremy Topham

In the second of two branch visits by Jeremy Topham, Chairman W Midlands/S Wales Region, and Louisa Evans, Development Officer Cardiff, Jeremy sends us this report of life Downend.

## Downend Women's Branch

Downend is a pleasant suburb at the north east corner of Bristol and the branch was started in 1962 - well before the days of integration. Pat Rawlings, Branch Chairman, is a founder member and she recounts the tale of breaking away from Bristol Central Branch to form the group with four other ladies. Their efforts prospered and they soon were deeply involved in providing a library and a voluntary lift service for visitors to the nearby Frenchay Hospital, teas for the Blood Transfusion Service, and voluntary meals-on-wheels. Later, in recognition of their work with the old peoples' welfare group, the branch was given use of a cottage in the area and this became their headquarters, Toc H House, until its demolition was required to allow building of new blocks of council flats.

Nowadays, the branch meets in the Community Flat, which is on the ground floor of one of the blocks - Berkeley House. Secretary Grace Talbot met Louisa Evans and me one Wednesday evening last summer and showed us round. The meeting room is bright and cheerful, warm and cosy, with comfortable armchairs and fitted carpet. As I sank into one of the chairs, I thought of the many Toc H meetings I'd spent on hard benches in church halls, and I quickly realised which environment I preferred. Branch members were keen to point out that an inviting and attractive venue is necessary today to create an image of quality in Toc H which would both entice and retain newcomers. They felt that a lot of the success of their branch was due to their fine surroundings.

There are 18 members on the branch roll with two recent initiations. Unfortunately the branch has lost several members by death in recent years. Most members attend each meeting and friends come along as well - many eventually become members. New faces are usually introduced through personal contact and they are attracted by the friendship and the spirit of fellowship and acceptance in the branch. Their former Pilot called it the 'Family of Toc H', where if you have a problem you are likely to contact a Toc H friend. A family will confide in each other and help sort out problems. Members believe that if the branch became too big it would lose its friendliness and start to form cliques.

Members' ages range from mid-50s to upper 80s and there is a wide spread of professions from teachers and cooks to nurses and councillors. Most denominations are represented and, though the branch has no padre, it invites ministers of local churches to lead occasional programmes on the Fourth Point when differing opinions are expressed without ill feeling. Members feel, however, that the spiritual side of Toc H comes into most areas of activity and is never forgotten.

The branch arranges its programme well in advance and in summer meets in the evening (except August) and in winter



meets mostly in the afternoons. The style of meeting is traditional with branch news, Light and reflection, business items, followed by tea, then the speaker. One meeting a month is kept for branch business and outside speakers are sought for another twice each month. A log of each meeting is written by the member who leads the Ceremony of Light, thus the task is circulated.

'Committee work is like a soft chair - easy to get into but hard to get out of', says Pat Rawlings. Two years ago the branch officers felt that a change was needed and in the absence of new volunteers they would resign and close the branch. The tactic worked and new officers were appointed. The view is that if officers change regularly the branch becomes much more interesting. Pilot and Jobmaster roles are considered vital and are actively filled.

Branch activities include coffee mornings which have recently contributed to Friendship Circles and Friends of Talbot House, Christmas party and lunch, and teas for the local blood donation session. Members choose a big project to work towards each year. £300 has been donated to Talking Books for the Blind, £200 for special mattresses and pillows. The branch participates in Toc H events helped by subsidies provided from a donation by a late member; usually a minibus is hired and district and regional events are well supported.

Recently the branch held a sponsored silence. Members raised £100 and feel it was a major achievement, even remembering not to say thank you when the teas were passed round!

The meeting room is fitted with a radio microphone system which allows those with impaired hearing to understand what the speaker is saying. The portable mike feeds into a loop from which the user of an earpiece gets a signal. One member, who is also Chairwoman of the local Deaf Club, uses the system regularly as the only way she can participate in meetings. I noticed that when I started to speak she turned it off! Something to do with 'waffle', which I presume is a technical term.

What of the future? Some members are concerned that younger women are not involved and are not sure how to attract

*(continued on next page)*



them. They suspect that there may be more pressure on younger people today and they wonder if they would want their kind of meeting. Nonetheless, the branch feels confident that it can continue to attract members in its present age range and will be going strong with many different members in ten years time despite competing for membership with several somewhat similar organisations. All are young in spirit and willing to adapt. Toc H is well regarded in the local community and what limited publicity it gets is good. The branch says that if it has failed at all, it is in failing to advertise itself enough. With some members being elderly, a big problem is lack of transport - only two members have cars and lack of mobility is very restricting.

Louisa and I came away from Downend Branch feeling that the key to its success is its close fellowship. Besides serving the local community, it fulfils the needs of its members. It's attractive because of its friendliness, its comfortable meeting place, and because it is the right size to have variety and life without being impersonal and bureaucratic. ■

## Up Date

### Wembley Toc H Blind Social Club

The brief note in the July issue of *Point three* about the club's Sapphire Party, (not a Dinner, as was stated) after 45 years of service to the blind in Wembley, quickly resulted in the club gaining a new member. Someone living locally picked up the issue of *Point three* at All Hallows and so learnt about the club. In a letter informing us about this, Doris Goodall, the organiser, points out that her husband Leonard, a member of the old Wembley branch of Toc H and founder of the club, was not near-blind as stated in the article and in fact retained his sight until his death.

The Revd E J Basil Jones, who joined Toc H in 1941 and served the movement as a branch, district, area and regional Padre, recently celebrated 50 years in the ministry.

Basil and his wife Janet are enthusiastic members of Llandudno Branch and he is still on call to branches in Cheshire and North Wales. He will be remembered throughout the North Wales and North West Region for his talks and sermons and willingness to be of help.



Revd E J Basil Jones

Congratulations to Vic Court, District Executive member and chairman of Chiseldon Branch, awarded the BEM in the Queen's Honours List. He is the second BEM in the Swindon District. Ted Brewer, who became a member of the Purton Branch recently, also holds this honour.

### Welcome to 15

## New Members

The following new members were registered during August/September

Claude H Glading, Peter A Knight (Clacton-on-Sea M).  
Mrs Mildred Pym, Mrs Pauline White (Hazel Grove J)  
Mrs Violet E B Lee (Hythe J)  
Charles H Pearce (Ipswich M)  
Terry M Lloyd (Leominster J)

Kenneth R Owen (Llandudno J)  
Miss Pamela Laine (Nailsea W)  
Mrs Mary Palmer (Rushden W)  
Mrs Jane Cobbledick, Ms Stephanie Roch (South Yorks District)  
Barry T Jackson (Tyne & Wear District)  
Mrs Jean P Stoneham (London District)  
Mrs Evelyn H Hall (Wolds District)

## SPECIAL TRIBUTES

### We give thanks for their lives

Paddock (Huddersfield Women's) Branch report with deep regret the death in July of Alice Keys. She joined the branch over 40 years ago after transferring from Oldham. She served on the Colsterdale Centre Committee for many years, working tirelessly for its success. A forthright speaker with a fine sense of humour, she will be sadly missed. JDB

Kay Chidley died on 25 June after nearly 30 years of devoted membership in Toc H. In 1962 she joined

Loughton Branch, where she alternated as chairman and secretary for many years. She also acted as secretary of the West Essex District Team. With her husband Norman, who survives her, she joined Broadstairs and St Peters Joint Branch in 1980, serving as branch secretary for several years as well as secretary of Thanet District. She performed her duties with meticulous perfection, truly lived out Toc H in her daily life and was an inspiration to many. DW

The death in July of Leslie Horswell, who was 81 years old and had served for many years as secretary of Newton Abbot Men's Branch, was received with great sadness. He had a lively sense of humour and could always be relied on to make a thoughtful contribution to any discussion. The large number that

attended the service of thanksgiving for his life was some indication of the high regard in which he was held by the local community. NAF

Sheaf Branch (Sheffield) regretfully report the death of Winnie Wilde on 11 June. Although restricted by ill health and consequently unable to hold a branch office, Winnie worked in whatever way she could for Toc H. She welcomed members into her home for a monthly meeting of Christian fellowship and enjoyed raising plants in her garden to be sold at Toc H events. She will be sadly missed. JF

'Death, then, being a way and condition of life, we cannot love to live if we cannot bear to die.' William Penn

### We regret to announce the death of the following members:

In June— Margaret Lucas (Heathfield)  
Winnie Wilde, late Sheaf (Sheffield)  
In July — Leslie A Horswell (Newton Abbot)  
Alice Keys (Paddock)  
In August— Maureen Boyer (Cleveland District)

## Deaths

Rosemarie Britton (Downend)  
Frank Close (Darlington District)  
Denis G Gilman (Cavendish District)  
Irene Jamson, late Thurocroft (Rotherham)  
Margaret L King (Rushden)  
Alice Mycock (Watford)

Alfred T Newnham (Wellingborough)  
Eileen M Purdy (Plymstock)  
Alfred Withers (Lyminster)

Not previously recorded—  
Denis Ongley (Shooters Hill District)  
Mabel M Stubbs (Shooters Hill District)



**S E Region Toc H  
AUTUMN EVENT  
Saturday 12 October 10.30-4.30  
COME SHOPPING**

**for what Toc H is about  
Visiting 6 or 7 "Shops"  
of Current Activities  
What will you buy?  
No cash needed!**  
Coffee, light lunch, tea—£3  
Toc H House  
38 Newark Street  
Whitechapel, London E1 2AA

**A PEACE OF FLANDERS**

A special visit to Talbot House, Poperinge from 8 to 12 November 1991 at a time of Remembrance to explore issues of conflict and reconciliation.

Departure from Hatfield or Dover Priory Station. Some local overnight accommodation may be available on application.

Leaders, John Burgess and Alan Johnson.

Cost: approximately £120.

For further details please write, or to book a place, please send a deposit of £40 to:

John Burgess  
66 Park Meadow, Hatfield, Herts AL9 5HB  
(cheques payable to: J.U Burgess - Toc H Account)  
*Please note. Some selection of applicants will be made to ensure a balanced group.*

**AVON DISTRICT TOC H**

invite you to a

**CONCERT**

at St Mary Redcliffe Church  
on Saturday 23rd November, 7.30

The programme will include:  
**The Ynysowen Male Choir  
and Ladies Choir**

**Aberfan and District and  
Thornbury Castle Band**  
Programmes £3 (oap £2) from:  
Miss D. Dawes, 338 Bath Road  
Keynsham, Bristol BS18 1TQ  
Tel: (0225) 873022

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

*John Mitchell will be stepping down as Director of Toc H in November 1992.*

The DIRECTOR of Toc H needs to have a high degree of commitment and a clear understanding of all aspects of the movement.

The DIRECTOR is the principal representative of Toc H and travels extensively in the UK (and overseas) addressing membership and the public.

The DIRECTOR is a member of the senior management team at Headquarters and is responsible for all aspects of development of the movement.

The DIRECTOR is a Principal Officer of Toc H and is usually appointed for a 5-year term which may be renewed.

Anyone wishing to be considered for the above post should write (*by no later than 30th November 1991*), giving full curriculum vitae to: Julian Ranson, Chairman Personnel sub-committee, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT (0296 623911).

**AN HONEST TEST**

The Revd Bob Knight's delightful and challenging book has been attractively re-designed, and considerably updated with new material and an additional chapter.

*It is now available from Jenny Small in the Editorial Department, Toc H Headquarters,  
1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT.*

**Price £2.00 (incl. p&p)**

Copies will be on sale at Central Council.

**Toc H  
Christmas Cards**



"Robin" cards are 6"x4" and are priced £1 per pack of 5 (all the same design) - 4 designs



Religious cards are small 3"x4", priced £1 for 8 designs in a pack.

Full details and prices from:

Miss Daphne Dawes,  
338 Bath Road,  
Keynsham, Bristol  
BS18 1TQ.

Tel: (0225) 873022.

They will be on sale at Central Council.

**WARDEN MANOR  
AWARDS**

These are available to branches/groups/districts which are planning new ventures to involve people with Toc H for the first time.

Applications are considered at any time and forms can be obtained from John Biggerstaff at Headquarters.

**1992  
DIARIES**

Slimline design in red with a ribbon. Contains information about Toc H and regional, national and international Toc H addresses.

**£1 each (plus p&p)**

On sale at Central Council.

**Small Ads**

Small advertisements must be received (with remittance) five weeks before publication day, which is the 23rd of the preceding month. The charge is 10p a word (minimum £1) plus VAT, to *Point three Magazine*. Rates of display advertisements can be obtained from the Editorial Office, Toc H Headquarters, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT.

**Hythe, Kent** - homely accommodation in members home. Bed/breakfast and/or evening meal or full board, very reasonable rates. Enquire Nesta Cock, 7 Tournay Close, Lympne, Hythe, Kent CT12 4LL. Tel: 0303 269407